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FY 2009 FOREIGN ASSISTANCE GOALS

Thailand is the most economically developed, politically free nation in Southeast Asia. The country remains a military ally, a dependable partner in the fight against terrorism, a strong and influential regional economic and political leader, and an important collaborator in law enforcement and in combating new environmental and health challenges. The alliance between the United States and Thailand is close and longstanding.

Thailand has experienced continued political instability during FY 2009. Though the current democratically elected government has been in power for nearly a year, a deep divide remains in the political sphere. Fiscal Year 2009 year was marked by continuing protests, at times violent, which temporarily forced the closure of government offices and Bangkok's two international airports. In the south, violence fueled by ethnic-Malay Muslim separatists has claimed approximately 3,400 lives since 2004, and along the Thai-Burma border, more than 150,000 refugees from Burma are living in camps. Finally, the global economic crisis continues to pose significant challenges to Thailand's export-driven economy.

Embassy Bangkok's assistance demonstrates the United States Government (USG)'s close cooperation. Given Thailand's key regional security role, the two countries work together in security and law enforcement areas to ensure that the Thai Government has the information and tools it needs to protect its own population and to address regional security efforts. The United States and Thailand share a common interest in improving border security and controls that will enhance Thailand's ability to counter transnational crime, and complement other security and counternarcotics programs. Embassy Bangkok is also aiding Thailand in the establishment of a national strategic trade control system to counter the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Yet another aspect of the United States-Thai counterterrorism partnership involves training and education at U.S. military and civilian institutions.

In the area of democratic governance, Embassy Bangkok has continued its consultations with various stakeholders in the Thai judicial system in order to assist Royal Thai Government (RTG) efforts to increase fairness and effectiveness. USG assistance also has focused more generally on promoting more effective and accountable institutions of government and on working toward a peaceful resolution to the conflict in the South. The health sector remains an important area for

USG assistance in the form of substantial programming addressing HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), and other infectious diseases.

HIGHLIGHTS BY PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Peace and Security

During FY 2009, Embassy Bangkok continued its longstanding commitment to providing substantive training to Thai officials at all levels and in all branches of government. For example, dozens of Thai military officers attended advanced training courses in the United States. Alumni of this program have gone on to occupy positions of influence in the RTG, serving as commanders, defense ministers, and even prime ministers. Embassy Bangkok programs also trained significant numbers of Thai military, law enforcement officers, and civilians in the fight against terrorism.

Cooperation on antiterrorism programming has proceeded on many levels. Embassy Bangkok officials are in constant contact with Thai officials in a number of areas – not only security personnel, but also those in the judicial system. United States and RTG personnel met frequently for consultations, advisory meetings, and high-level discussions. The relationship in FY 2009 included regular ad hoc consultations on security issues. Specific programs also trained Thai security personnel at the working level. Demand for these courses in FY 2009 far exceeded available supply. In the coming year, Embassy Bangkok looks forward to expanding and strengthening its training programs.

With U.S. technical assistance, Thai borders have become more secure. In FY 2009, U.S. technical assistance continued to help Thai immigration officials screen the millions of individuals that enter the country on an annual basis. Moreover, the assistance has proven vital in supporting the apprehension of criminals and those who travel on counterfeit documents. These programs undergo continual review and refinement in an effort to process passengers even more quickly and efficiently. Additionally, FY 2009 saw Thailand make further progress in implementing an integrated export control regime – a complex task requiring intense inter-agency and international coordination.

Governing Justly and Democratically

The Transnational Crimes Affairs Section in Embassy Bangkok continued its ongoing consultations with the Thai Ministry of Justice, Attorney General's Office, and others to increase fairness and effectiveness throughout the Thai justice system. Thai judges were invited on study tours to the United States, where they could access their counterparts in the United States. The role of Thai judges is especially important given their power to draft legislation and effect reform. The Thai judicial system has welcomed advice and assistance from the USG. Embassy Bangkok also worked closely with the Royal Thai Police to help them with complex law-enforcement issues that have emerged in recent years, as well as institutional reforms.

The U.S. Agency for International Development's Regional Development Mission Asia activities continued to support families and individuals through initiatives to raise awareness of diversity within mainstream Thai society.

Investing in People

Embassy Bangkok's continuing efforts in addressing HIV/AIDS, TB, and other infectious diseases in Thailand saw significant success in FY 2009. The HIV program demonstrated strong achievements against its targets with implementing organizations, reaching over 11,231 people in

Thailand with HIV prevention education and the distribution of condoms, as well as voluntary counseling and testing services. Support to Thailand on TB control is directed towards developing capacity on cutting-edge techniques in the diagnosis of drug resistant TB and operations research to improve program delivery. The USG supported training for over 400 health care staff on the use of a new molecular-based TB rapid test. The Mekong Malaria Program continued to support the "Centers of Excellence" for drug quality monitoring in Thai institutions (Mahidol University and Chulalongkorn University) and strengthen anti-malarial drug quality surveillance.